



# MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM

## EDITORIAL AND STYLE GUIDE

2025



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# RULES ON READABILITY

Writers and editors should follow the most recent edition of the *Associated Press Stylebook*, except as noted in this Style Guide.

**Where there are questions about branding or trademarks, please see the individual brand's branding guide.**

All writing should follow established plain language guidelines and practices in compliance with the Plain Writing Act of 2010.

## Plain Language Characteristics

**Clarity:** The meaning is unmistakable and easy to grasp.

**Conciseness:** Unnecessary words and phrases are eliminated. Information is presented directly and efficiently.

**Accessibility:** The language is adaptable to different audiences and reading levels. It considers the audience's background knowledge and potential limitations.

**Organization:** Information is presented in a logical and structured manner, often using headings, subheadings, bullet points, and other formatting tools to improve readability.

**Active Voice:** Active voice is generally preferred, as it makes sentences clearer and more direct.

**Visual Appeal:** Documents using plain language often incorporate visual elements like white space, images, and charts to break up text and improve comprehension.

## Plain Language Readability Statistics

*The readability scores per the Flesch-Kincaide Grade Level and Reading Ease tests should follow the below guidelines:*

Content for Beneficiaries	Content for all Other Audiences
● Reading ease: 50.0 or higher	● Reading ease: 40.0 or higher
● Grade level: 9.9 or lower	● Grade Level: 12.9 or lower
● Passive voice: 10% or less	● Passive voice: 10% or less

You can enable readability statistics in Microsoft Word. Once enabled, Word will display these readability scores once it finishes checking the spelling and grammar.

Learn more about plain language at <https://digital.gov/guides/plain-language>.

## Style Elements

When creating new or updating existing content, you must use these style elements.

*You aren't required to go back and update content for the sole purpose of aligning to these style elements.*

Write in second person when possible.

**Yes** - What can you do to minimize the impact of an upper extremity injury?

**No** - What can active duty service members do to minimize the impact of an upper extremity injury?

## Other Tips:

- Use contractions.
- Use short sentences to avoid confusion.
- Average sentence length should be 20 words.
- Maximum sentence length should be no more than 40 words.
- Headlines should be no more than 100 characters. If needed, use a sub-headline.



# STYLE GUIDE

## 24/7

Should appear as above using numerals.

## aboard

Aboard a ship, not on board, on-board, or onboard a ship.

## academic degrees

Use an apostrophe for bachelor's degree, master's degree, etc. However, there is no possessive in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science (also note initial cap of degree in this instance). It's redundant to use both a title and academic/medical degree.

**Examples:** It's redundant to use Dr. John Jones, MD. Use either Dr. John Jones or John Jones, MD.

When used after a name, an academic abbreviation is set off by commas: Jerry McMillan, Ph.D., spoke.

Don't precede a name with a courtesy title for an academic degree and follow it with the abbreviation for the degree in the same reference.

Use such abbreviations as B.A., M.A., LL.D., and Ph.D. only when the need to identify many individuals by degree on first reference would make the preferred form cumbersome. Use these abbreviations only after a full name, never after just a last name.

## Accredo

TRICARE Pharmacy Program specialty pharmacy services provider.

## acronyms

Only use acronyms on second reference. Don't follow the first reference with an acronym in parentheses unless the acronym would not be clear on second reference. The only exceptions are NATO, SEAL, USO, POW/MIA, and acronyms covered in the AP Stylebook.

## active voice vs. passive voice

Always strive to write in the active voice. 10% or less should be passive.

## Active Duty Dental Program, or ADDP

The Active Duty Dental Program provides civilian dental care for active duty service members.

## active duty family member, or ADFM

Not capitalized unless at the beginning of a sentence, and in that scenario, only initial caps at the beginning of the sentence.

**Example:** Active duty service members are the sponsors.

## active duty service member, or ADSM

Never active-duty. Not capitalized unless at the beginning of a sentence, and in that scenario, only initial caps at the beginning of the sentence.

**Example:** Active duty service members are the sponsors.

## addresses

Use the abbreviations Ave., Blvd., and St., and the two-letter state postal abbreviation when listing addresses. Use periods with P.O. Box. Spell out street and state names in the text when used without a specific address.

## Example:

- The parade began on Elm Street in New Haven, CT.
- Naval Hospital Jacksonville is located at 2080 Child St., Jacksonville, FL.

## affect vs. effect vs. impact

**Affect** as a verb means "to influence." *The game will affect the standings.*

**Affect** as a noun is occasionally used in psychology to describe an emotion, but there is no need for it in everyday language.

**Effect** as a verb means "to cause." *He will effect many changes in the company.*

**Effect** as a noun means "result." *He miscalculated the effect of his actions.*

**Impact** as a verb means "strike with a blow" or "to pack firmly together." *The wisdom tooth impacted the molar.* Impact as a noun means "a collision." *The constant impact of the two-gear mechanisms on each other eventually produced metal fatigue in several sprockets.* Don't use **impact** as a verb in place of "to affect." Don't use **impact** as a noun in place of "effect."





### **age and date ranges**

Always use numerals when referencing ages. When writing a range of ages or dates, use “to” or “through” as appropriate. Don’t use a hyphen, en dash, or em dash.

**Example:** Ages 11 to 14 or Ages 11 through 14; Jan. 1 to Jan. 30 (meaning until Jan. 30) or Jan. 1 through Jan. 30.

### **and/or**

Don’t use. Choose the most appropriate option for the situation or use “a or b or both” construct.

### **armed services or Armed Services**

Lowercase unless part of a proper noun name. Avoid using unless in the context of a proper name, like the House and Senate committees and the Armed Services Blood Program.

**Example:** Armed Services Blood Program.

### **all-inclusive**

### **area**

Use when referring to TRICARE overseas areas and Competitive Plans Demonstration areas.

**Example:** Atlanta area, Tampa area.

### **assistant secretary**

Capitalize before a name as part of a title; use lowercase when the title appears after the name.

### **automatically enrolled**

Never auto enrolled or auto-enrolled.

### **BENEFEDS.gov**

Never benefeds.gov.

### **beneficiary vs. enrollee vs. member**

Use “beneficiary” to refer to those with any TRICARE health or dental plan.

Use “enrollee” as appropriate when referencing those with a TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select plan. Never use “enroll,” “enrollee,” or “enrollment” when referencing TRICARE For Life.

### **Beneficiary Web Enrollment**

Not BWE.

When referring to Beneficiary Web Enrollment, use: “Log in by going to milConnect and select “Manage Health Benefits.”

### **blind, low vision**

Not low-vision, unless used as a compound modifier.

### **brand names**

Refer to products, brands, etc., as they’re branded, even in headlines or at the beginning of a sentence.

**Example:** eCorrespondence, milConnect, iPad, MHS GENESIS, TRICARE.

### **breastfed, breastfeed**

### **bullets**

Bullets should align with inside hanging indents. Use solid round bullets for the first tier and solid square bullets for the second tier. Begin text at the next tab. There should be breaks before and after bulleted lists.

### **Examples:**

- This is an example of how to use bullets correctly in Microsoft Word document drafts. Make certain your second line and subsequent lines are flush left with your first line as shown. Use a period if it’s a complete sentence.
  - Flossing twice a day
  - Brushing your teeth after every meal

Bulleted lists should be initial capped (first word only). Don’t use periods after phrases or clauses — use periods after complete sentences only.

**Note:** It’s OK if some items in a bulleted list have a period at the end and others don’t.

### **bullets (sub)**

Use solid square bullets for sub-bullets as screen readers don’t recognize open circles as bullets. Indent so the bullet marker is directly beneath the first letter of the primary bullet above it.



**Example:**

- This is how you use a first tier bullet. See above for more information.
  - This is an example of how to use sub-bullets correctly in Word document drafts.

**civilian titles**

Don't use courtesy titles such as Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms. unless requested by the named person. Other formal titles such as Dr., Sen., or Gov. should be used where applicable. Don't use such titles on second reference unless necessary to differentiate two people with the same last name.

**civilian health care or civilian care**

Don't use private sector care or purchased care.

**coinsurance****commas**

Always use serial comma, also known as Oxford comma. This is a deviation from AP style.

**Example:** "Learn about medical, pharmacy, and dental options."

**command-sponsored**

Always hyphenate.

**command sponsorship**

Only hyphenate when used as a compound modifier.

**compound words**

Compounded modifiers that precede a noun are usually hyphenated.

**Example:** brand-name drug, TRICARE-eligible coverage.

**Congress**

Initial cap the U.S. Congress and Congress when referring to the legislative branch of the U.S. government that includes both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

**congressional**

Lowercase, unless part of a proper name.

**Example:** congressional committee, Congressional Directory, the Congressional Record.

**continued articles and charts**

When working with an article or chart that begins on one page and continues on a different page, use "(Continued on page X)". It should appear flush right at the bottom of the article or chart on the first page. Use "(Continued from page X)" on the continuing page, appearing flush left at the top of the article or chart.

**contractions**

- Use contractions whenever possible: You're, they're, can't, haven't.
- Contractions are more conversational and help hit plain language targets.
- Always use "you aren't" or "they aren't."
- Studies show that the eye skips over "not" but actually stops at the apostrophe, so the contraction for "not" is more effective.
- Never use "would've" for "would have", or "you've" for "you have."

**CONUS**

All uppercase. Generally refers to the 48 contiguous United States. With TRICARE, use CONUS only for TRICARE dental products. CONUS service area includes the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Also, see *OCONUS* and *stateside*.

**copayment**

Never copay or co-payment.

**costs**

Because health care costs change on a regular basis, don't include costs in MHS-produced materials

**Example:** (articles, fact sheets, and handbooks) unless necessary. Instead, refer reader to [www.tricare.mil/costs](http://www.tricare.mil/costs) or [health.mil/rates](http://health.mil/rates) for the most current cost information.

**cost-effective****cost-share**

Never cost share.

**country specific, country-specific**

Use country-specific when a compound modifier.

**Example:** For country-specific numbers, contact your regional contractor.



## **court-martial**

Plural is courts-martial.

## **COVID-19**

### **dashes**

Em dashes (—) in sentences: Use the em dash (instead of a hyphen or en dash) to connect phrases within a sentence. Use a space on either side of the em dash. To make an em dash, hold down the alt key and type “0151.”

**Example:** Monday - Friday.

En dashes (–) for intervals of any kind. Use the en dash to indicate an interval or in place of “to” in periods of time. Use a space on either side of the en dash. Don’t use the en dash when the words “from” or “between” are used. To make an en dash, hold down the alt key and type “0150.”

**Example:** From Jan. 1, 2002, to March 10, 2003; between ages 18 and 64.

See also hyphens.

### **dates**

Months with specific date: Follow AP style. When months are used with specific dates, abbreviate months with six or more letters (Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.). Spell out when used alone, or with a year alone.

Days of the week: Don’t abbreviate, except when needed in a tabular format.

Months with specific date and year: When a phrase refers to a month, day, and year, set off the year with commas.

**Example:** It’s known that Feb. 8, 1964, was a great day in history.

Ranges: Insert an en dash between the dates with no spaces.

**Example:** Oct. 15–Nov. 28.

Years: Only use years with dates when a range of dates crosses years or when the date is not in the current year.

Calendar: Always use the complete four-digit number for a year.

**Example:** 1999, not ‘99.

Fiscal: Spell out the fiscal year in text at first mention, then FY on all mentions that follow.

## **Deaf vs. deaf vs. hard of hearing**

Initial cap Deaf when discussing the Deaf culture or Deaf community. Use the lowercase form deaf when describing the audiological condition of total or major hearing loss, and for people with total or major hearing loss. Use hard of hearing to describe people with a lesser degree of hearing loss.

## **demonstrations and pilots**

Always use the full name of a demonstration or pilot at first mention. If possible, shorten all subsequent references.

**Examples:** First reference: TRICARE Comprehensive Autism Care Demonstration.

Subsequent references: Autism Care Demonstration.

First reference: TRICARE Prime® Demo by CareSource Military & Veterans.

Subsequent references: TRICARE Prime Demo.

## **dependent**

Don’t use when referring to a TRICARE-eligible family member of a sponsor. Use family member or beneficiary.

## **diabetes (type 1, type 2)**

Never Type 1 or Type 2. Use person with diabetes instead of diabetic person. Use diabetes supplies instead of diabetic supplies.

## **diagnosis-related group**

## **disenroll, disenrollment**

## **Department of War, DOW**

Use Department of War on first reference. The acronym, DOW or DoW, is acceptable on second reference. Department of Defense or DOD/DoD is appropriate for content created prior to the name change. Usage of Department of Defense or DOD/DoW remains in effect when referring to instructions or manuals. DOW is the preferred style for captions and metadata.

**Example:** TRICARE is a registered trademark of the Department of Defense, Defense Health Agency. All rights reserved.



## DMDC/DEERS Support Office

Formerly Defense Manpower Data Center, now just DMDC/DEERS Support Office.

## drug categories

Not drug tiers when referring to prescription drugs in the TRICARE Pharmacy Program. TRICARE groups prescription drugs into four categories: generic formulary drugs, brand-name formulary drugs, non-formulary drugs, and non-covered drugs. Describe drug categories by their name, not level.

**Example:** “non-covered drugs” instead of “tier four.”

## drug vs. medication

Preference is to use drug for plain language purposes, but medication is acceptable to avoid overly repetitious wording. Never use medicine to mean drug or medication, as it most commonly means “the science or practice of the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease.”

## DS Logon

Never Department of Defense Single Sign on Logon or DSL.

**Note:** myAuth is replacing DS Logon for milConnect.

## effect

See *affect vs. effect vs. impact*.

## electronic health record, or EHR

Use to refer to the system, not an individual’s health records. Never electronic medical record, or EMR.

## ellipsis

In general, don’t use ellipses, unless indicating part of a quote was removed. An exception is when it’s used as part of a styled name. Treat an ellipsis as a word with spaces on either side.

## email

Never e-mail.

## e.g. and i.e.

Don’t use e.g. and i.e. Instead use “for example” or provide the exact intended information or definition with no lead. Use “that is” in place of i.e.

## Example:

- TRICARE offers numerous program options.  
For example: TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Select, and

TRICARE Reserve Select.

- Adjunctive dental services (dental care that is medically necessary in the treatment of an otherwise covered medical—not dental—condition).

## emergency room

In the U.S.: emergency room. “ER” is acceptable on second reference. In overseas locations: emergency care facility.

## end-stage renal disease, or ESRD

Lowercase and hyphenate end-stage.

## enroll vs. purchase

Enroll, enrollment, and enrollment fee are terms strictly for TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Prime Remote, USFHP, and TRICARE Select.

Purchase, buy, and premiums are terms strictly for TRICARE Reserve Select, TRICARE Retired Reserve, TRICARE Young Adult, and CHCBP.

## explanation of benefits, or EOB

Lowercase. Plural is explanations of benefits.

## Express Scripts, Inc. (Express Scripts)

The TRICARE Pharmacy Program contractor. While Express Scripts, Inc. is the formal company name, use only Express Scripts.

## fax

Never facsimile.

## federal

Use lowercase for adjectival references: federal employees, federal agencies, federal taxes. Don’t capitalize “federal,” per AP style, except when used in a proper name such as Federal Bureau of Investigation.

## Federal Benefits Open Season

Use only for the open season managed by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management for enrollment in the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program. Also see *open season*.

## Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program, or FEDVIP

“Employees” not “Employee.” First reference use Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program. FEDVIP in subsequent uses.





## footnotes and disclaimer symbols

The standard is to apply symbols in the following order:

Asterisk (\*)

Dagger (†)

Double Dagger (‡)

Section Mark (§)

Symbols should not appear in italics, but their associated disclaimers appear in italics. Use endnotes (superscript numbers, not symbols) in charts and when citing sources in newsletters.

In text, disclaimer symbols follow all punctuation except a dash. In text, use symbols. In tables, use numbers.

### Example:

... for a period of more than 30 days\*

... for a period of more than 30 days,\*

... for a period of more than 30 days.\*

(... for a period of more than 30 days).\*

... for a period of more than 30 days\* — and...

\* Make certain the second line and subsequent lines following a symbol are indented to align with the first word in the first line as shown.

## form titles

Always render in italics. Always use the full title of the form at first mention. Verify that the form title is accurate by consulting a hard copy or navigating to and opening an electronic copy. Don't initial cap or italicize the word "form" unless it's part of the form's title.

**Example:** *TRICARE Patient Referral and Authorization Form, Waiver of Non-Covered Services form (DD Form 1234)*. Note that the form number isn't rendered in italics when used with the form title. However, when used without the form title, render stand-alone *DD Form 1234* in italics.

**Note:** Some form titles vary by region. Always verify by accessing the actual form and using the name on the form itself.

## government

Always lowercase unless in direct reference to specific agencies; never abbreviate: the federal government, the state government, the U.S. government.

**Example:** Government Accountability Office.

## headlines

Follow AP style. Capitalize only the first word and proper nouns. Capitalize the first word after a colon.

**Example:** Venomous visitors highlight global health at Uniformed Services University.

## health care vs. healthcare

Two words in all instances. For proper names, use as indicated by the name owner.

**Example:** They used their health care plan to get health care.

## Health Insurance Marketplace

## Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Examination, or HP&DP Examination

Always capitalize Examination.

## HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, and HIV post-exposure prophylaxis, or PEP

Never PrEP or PEP alone.

## Humana Military

The TRICARE East Region contractor. Never just Humana or HGB.

## home page

## hyphen

Use the hyphen to connect grammatical elements, such as compound modifiers.

**Example:** out-of-pocket costs, full-time student.

## impact

See *affect vs. effect vs. impact*.

## inpatient



### insure vs. ensure

To insure means to take out insurance on something; to ensure means to make certain or guarantee.

**Example:** People should insure their vehicles to ensure they can get a replacement in case of an accident.

### International SOS Government Services, LLC (International SOS)

The TRICARE overseas contractor. In beneficiary communications, use International SOS in all instances.

### internet

Lowercase internet.

### intrafallopian

Not intra-fallopian.

### intrauterine

Not intra-uterine.

### italics

Titles of publications should appear in italics: *TRICARE Dental Program Handbook*. However, article titles should appear in quotation marks:

“What to know before TRICARE Open Season.”

Form names should appear in italics. The word “Form” should only appear in italics if it’s officially part of the form name.

### Example:

- *TRICARE Prime Enrollment, Disenrollment, and Primary Care Manager (PCM) Change Form* (DD Form 2876)
- *Continued Health Care Benefit Program (CHCBP) Application Form* (DD Form 2837)

DD Form numbers should follow the full name of the form in a non-italic parenthetical.

**Example:** *TRICARE Prime Enrollment, Disenrollment, and Primary Care Manager (PCM) Change Form* (DD Form 2876). Subsequent references to the form number should appear in italics.

**Example:** “When filling out *DD Form 2876*, take your time to read all instructions carefully.”

### The Joint Commission

Initial caps.

### late-enrollment penalty

### legislature

Initial cap when preceded by either the name of a state or the word state used in reference to a specific legislature: the Virginia Legislature; the state Legislature. Capitalize legislature after the first reference when the reference to that specific state’s legislature is clear: the Legislature, referring to a previously cited state legislature.

### legislative titles

In the first reference, use Rep., Reps., Sen., or Sens. before one or more legislators’ names in correspondence or text: Rep. Mary Smith, Sens. Jennifer Warner and Joseph Johnson. Drop legislative titles in the second reference unless it’s a direct quotation. Spell out representative and senator in lowercase when they stand alone.

### line breaks

- Always leave at least two lines of text in a paragraph at the end of a page and carry at least two lines over to complete the paragraph on the next page.
- Don’t split shorter paragraphs across pages.
- Always turn off hyphenation in design programs.
- Avoid hyphenating words at the end of lines

**Example:** paragraphs, columns.

- Avoid splitting dates or separating numbers from their nouns across two lines.

**Example:** Jan. 31, 2009, 30 days, 115%.

- Avoid widows. A widow is typically a single word or the end of a hyphenated word at the end of a paragraph or column. A widow is poor typography because it leaves too much white space between the paragraph it ends and the start of the next paragraph. Fix by editing the paragraph or adjusting character spacing.
- Avoid separating an introduction to a bulleted list from the bullets it’s introducing. This applies particularly for non-newsletter publications.
- Avoid using directionals (Example, listed above, shown to the right, outlined below). Instead use: the following list, the list provided, etc.
- When possible, avoid splitting a bullet across a non-spread. Never split a phone number across two lines.



- Avoid splitting a URL if it will fit on a single line. Flow it to the following line to avoid splitting. When it's necessary to split a long URL, split it at an intuitive point (at a forward slash) rather than in the middle of a word or term. URLs in electronic documents should hyperlink to meaningful text that describes the link.
- Don't hyperlink qualified URLs as [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).
- Hyperlink to meaningful text, such as [search for anything](#), and not [here](#) (where here is the hyperlink).
- This ensures your links are accessible for users of assistive technology.

#### **login vs. log in**

Log in as a verb, no hyphen. Use log in to, never log into or logon.

Login as a noun.

**Example:** You log in to your account using your login name.

#### **Lou Gehrig's disease**

Use Lou Gehrig's disease on first reference but include the medical name (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) later. ALS is acceptable in headlines and on second reference.

Outside of the U.S., it's known as 'motor neuron/neurone disease.'

#### **managed care support contractor, or MCSC**

Don't use; this term is outdated. Instead, use regional contractor.

#### **Medical Assistance number**

Refers to the regional numbers managed by the TRICARE overseas contractor that provide 24/7 support for TRICARE overseas beneficiaries when they need urgent or emergent care or request medical assistance. Not Medical Assistance line.

#### **Medicare-approved amount**

#### **Medicare-eligible instead of entitled**

#### **Medicare non-participating provider**

#### **Medicare-wraparound coverage**

#### **mental disorder**

Not mental condition.

#### **mental health**

Not behavioral health. Don't use interchangeably with behavioral health.

#### **MHS GENESIS**

All caps. Not MHS Genesis. Never use GENESIS on its own. Can be used with other terms such as "MHS GENESIS Patient Portal."

#### **milConnect**

#### **military dental clinic**

Lowercase. "Dental treatment facility" is outdated.

#### **Military Health System Nurse Advice Line (MHS Nurse Advice Line)**

First reference use Military Health System Nurse Advice Line. Second reference MHS Nurse Advice Line. Always spell out Nurse Advice Line. Don't use NAL.

#### **Military Health System vs. Defense Health Agency**

The Military Health System, or MHS, is a health care institution that is comprised of Office of the Assistant Secretary of War for Health Affairs, Joint Staff Surgeon, Defense Health Agency, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, and expeditionary care.

The Defense Health Agency, or DHA, an integrated Combat Support Agency, is an element of the MHS. DHA operates the TRICARE program, the Department of War's electronic health record — MHS GENESIS — and provides care through 700+ military hospitals, clinics, and dental clinics around the world.

#### **military hospital or clinic**

Lowercase. Within the DHA, military medical treatment facility or MTF is commonly used. However, for external use, military hospital or clinic is used.

#### **military medical treatment facility, or MTF**

Don't use in external communications.  
See *military hospital or clinic*.

#### **military pay grade**

Not military rank; hyphenate grades.



**Example:** E-4, not E4.

#### **military ranks**

Use AP style for news releases, website articles, and other external products. For internal products, see the *Military Ranks* section of this document.

#### **military services**

Lowercase unless part of a program name. Use only in reference to the U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Space Force, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

**Note:** TRICARE includes non-military services. See *uniformed services*.

#### **military titles**

Abbreviate all military titles in accordance with AP style. On second reference, drop the title and use just the last name.

#### **myAuth**

myAuth is replacing DS Logon.

#### **naloxone**

Use instead of Narcan or NARCAN.

#### **National Guard and Reserve**

Initial caps and use only in the above order. When appropriate, can also use National Guard or Reserve. Never “Reserve and National Guard.” Also, never National Guard/Reserve (with a slash). Identify personnel as Soldiers or Airmen (by their parent services). If you’re referring to members of both branches on non-Federal duty, you may use National Guardsmen.

#### **nonavailability**

Only hyphenate when part of a proper form name.

**Example:** the *TDP OCONUS Non-Availability and Referral Form*.

#### **non-certified**

#### **noncoital**

#### **noncombatant**

Never non-combatant.

#### **non-covered**

For prescription drugs, see *drug categories*.

#### **nonemergency**

#### **non-formulary**

For prescription drugs, see *drug categories*.

#### **non-network**

A type of TRICARE provider. Lowercase and hyphenate.

#### **nonparticipating**

A type of TRICARE provider. Lowercase, no hyphenation.

#### **non-surgical**

#### **numbers**

Write out the numbers one through nine. For numbers 10 and higher, use numerals. If a sentence begins with a number — a construction to avoid — then write out the number. For ages and percentages, always use numerals. When one through nine appear in the same sentence as a number where you would use a numeral, use the numeral for both. Also, see *ages; percentages*.

#### **OCONUS**

All caps. Generally refers to areas outside the 48 contiguous United States. With TRICARE, use OCONUS only for TRICARE dental products. The TRICARE Dental Program OCONUS service area includes areas not in the CONUS service area (the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) and covered services provided aboard a ship or vessel outside the territorial waters of the CONUS service area. Also, see *CONUS* and *overseas*.

#### **out-of-pocket, out of pocket**

Hyphenate when used as an adjective.

- Her lab tests were an out-of-pocket expense.
- She paid for her lab tests out of pocket.

#### **outpatient**

#### **overseas**

Lowercase. With TRICARE, overseas includes U.S. territories (American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) and all other nations



outside the U.S. Use OCONUS only for TRICARE dental products.

**open season**

Lowercase, unless using as part of a proper name, like TRICARE Open Season or Federal Benefits Open Season. Never open enrollment period, open period, annual open enrollment season, etc. Open season refers to the annual period where one may enroll in or change a health care plan for the upcoming year. Also see *Federal Benefits Open Season* and *TRICARE Open Season*.

**Pap test**

Render as above (not Pap smear).

**participating**

A type of TRICARE provider. Lowercase.

**payer**

Not payor.

**payment methods**

When listing payment options, always list in the following order: allotment, electronic funds transfer (use EFT on subsequent references), credit, or debit card.

**per diem****percent, percentages**

Use the % when pairing it with a numeral. Don't use a space between the number and the %. Spell out percent in casual use. Use decimals rather than fractions, and precede numbers less than 1% with a 0.

**Examples:** 12%, 3.6%.

"She has a zero percent chance of winning the game."  
0.6%.

**periods**

Use a period after a complete sentence only. Don't use periods after sentence fragments in bulleted lists. One space follows the period.

**Note:** It's ok if some items in a bulleted list have periods at the end (because they're complete sentences) and others don't (because they're fragments).

**physician assistant**

Not physician's assistant.

**point-of-service option**

Don't capitalize.

**postoperative****post traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD**

PTSD is acceptable on the first reference, but spell it out on second reference.

**pre-activation****pre-authorization vs. prior authorization**

Pre-authorization is for services that require special authorization.

Prior authorization is for prescriptions only.

Use approval when in doubt.

**Example:** You may need approval for some services.

**preexisting****preoperative****preventive**

Never preventative.

**primary care manager, or PCM**

Refers to an assigned health care professional who provides all routine and nonemergency health care to those enrolled in TRICARE Prime plans. Lowercase. Use acronym in subsequent references.

**primary care provider, or PCP**

Refers to an assigned health care professional who provides all routine and nonemergency health care to those enrolled in the US Family Health Plan. Lowercase. Use acronym in subsequent references.

**Prime Serve Area, or PSA**

Initial caps. Use acronym in subsequent references.





### professional titles

When identifying a service member with a professional title, such as a chaplain or physician, add the professional title in lowercase after the rank and name of the subject.

- Maj. Bill Smith, a chaplain, conducts a religious service.
- Cmdr. Jane Jones, a physician, examines a patient.

### publication titles

Render in italics. Verify that the publication title is accurate by consulting a hard copy or opening an electronic version.

### punctuation

All punctuation marks, including parentheses, brackets, and superior reference figures, are set to match the typeface of the words they adjoin.

### TRICARE Qualifying Life Event, or QLE

Uppercase when used following TRICARE. Lowercase in all other uses, even in the context of TRICARE. Use acronym in subsequent references.

### ranges

The form: *\$12 million to \$14 million*. Not: *\$12 to \$14 million*. Also: *a pay increase of 12%-15% or 12% to 15% or between 12% and 15%*. For full calendar years, hyphenated 2022-23 is acceptable.

### ranks

See *Military Ranks* section of this document.

### reenroll, reenrollment

### region

Initial cap when used with east, west, and overseas (Example, East Region beneficiaries, West Region beneficiaries Overseas Region beneficiaries).

### regional contractors

See *TRICARE regional contractors*.

### Reserve, Reserve Component

Always initial cap. Reserve is always singular.

### retired

Don't use (Ret.) when describing retired service members. Use the word retired before his or her service, rank, and name.

**Example:** Retired Sgt. Maj. Joe Smith, left, delivers a speech.

### service member

The term is two words; service isn't capitalized.

### sexually transmitted infection, or STI

Sexually transmitted infection, or STI, is preferred to sexually transmitted disease, or STD.

### singular "they"

They/them/their is acceptable in limited cases as a singular pronoun, when alternative wording is overly awkward or clumsy. Rewording usually is possible and always is preferable.

Don't use combination forms such as "(s)he" and "s/he."

### Social Security

Initial cap Social Security. When used with other terms follow these examples:

- Social Security Administration, or SSA
- Social Security Act
- Social Security number, or SSN, card, or benefits

### space available care

Don't use "space available care" or "space available basis." Instead use "if space is available."

### spacing

Use one space, not two, after a period at the end of a sentence and after a colon.

### stateside

Lowercase. With TRICARE, stateside includes the 50 United States and the District of Columbia. Use CONUS only for TRICARE dental products.

### substance use disorder

### suicide

When referencing suicide, use "died by suicide." Never "committed suicide."

### telephone numbers

Use figures in this format: 212-621-1500. If extension numbers are needed, use a comma to separate the main number from the extension.



**Example:** 212-621-1500, ext. 2. Toll-free: 800-555-1500

**Overseas number:** List international numbers in this style: +65-6338-9277 (+ followed by country code and phone number) and always use hyphens (per AP style)

#### time

Use a 12-hour clock. Use figures, except for noon and midnight. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes: 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 9–11 a.m., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

#### time zones

When referencing time zones in short format without a time, use “Eastern Time,” “Central Time,” “Mountain Time,” or “Pacific Time.” Be sure to capitalize region “Eastern,” as well as the word “Time.” Always use Eastern Time unless the event is local to somewhere else. When using a specific time, abbreviate the time zones used within the continental U.S., Canada, and Mexico: noon ET, 11 a.m. CT, 10 a.m. MT, 9 a.m. PT. Don’t set off the abbreviations with commas.

#### Example:

- Call center representatives can be reached worldwide between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. ET.
- The assistant secretary will arrive at Evans Army Community Hospital at 9 a.m. MT.
- Stop by the San Diego conference booth from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. PT.

#### titles

Follow AP style. Lowercase unless the title directly precedes the office holder’s name:

- Secretary of War Pete Hegseth was appointed in 2025.
- Hegseth was appointed secretary of war in 2025.

#### toll-free

Always hyphenated.

#### trademarks

Some brands in the MHS are registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and Institute of Heraldry. Please refer to those brands’ style guides for when and how to use registered trademark symbols.

#### TRICARE

All caps. Must appear with a registered trademark symbol® at

first mention in a heading. No registered trademark symbol is used at first mention in body text. In the following URLs, “TRICARE” is rendered in all caps: [www.TRICARE4u.com](http://www.TRICARE4u.com), [www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE](http://www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE), and [www.myTRICARE.com](http://www.myTRICARE.com). However, [www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil) and most other TRICARE URLs render “tricare” in lowercase.

#### TRICARE-allowable charge

#### TRICARE-authorized

Use a hyphen when using as a compound modifier.

#### TRICARE-covered services

#### TRICARE Dental Program, or TDP

A voluntary premium-based dental program for certain TRICARE beneficiaries.

#### TRICARE-eligible

#### TRICARE For Life, or TFL

Medicare-wraparound coverage for TRICARE-eligible beneficiaries who have Medicare Part A and Part B, regardless of place of residence. Doesn’t include active duty service members and active duty family members. Capital case all words in TRICARE For Life when spelled out, including “For.”

#### TRICARE Formulary

When referencing the search tool, use “TRICARE Formulary Search Tool.”

#### TRICARE Open Season

Use only for open season managed by the Defense Health Agency for enrollment in applicable TRICARE health plans. Also see *open season*.

#### TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery

Render as above when referring to the specific program. Otherwise, use home delivery when discussing receiving prescription drugs via mail.

#### TRICARE Pharmacy Program

#### TRICARE Prime



Always TRICARE Prime. Never Prime alone. On first reference in a publication's title or heading, include the registration mark (TRICARE Prime®). This includes TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Prime Overseas, TRICARE Prime Remote, TRICARE Prime Remote Overseas, TRICARE Young Adult-Prime, or US Family Health Plan.

### TRICARE Overseas Program, or TOP

Render as above on first reference. Subsequent references are TOP, never T.O.P. The types of providers are TOP network providers, non-network participating providers, non-network providers, and TRICARE Preferred Providers (Philippines only).

### TRICARE plan names

Always precede plan with TRICARE: TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Select.

**Note:** Prime and Select alone aren't acceptable.

### TRICARE regional contractors

Use full name at first mention.

- East Region: Humana Military
- West Region: TriWest Healthcare Alliance (TriWest)
- Overseas region: International SOS

### TRICARE regions

East Region, West Region, Overseas Region

### TRICARE retail network pharmacies

Lowercase retail network pharmacies.

### TRICARE Young Adult, or TYA

TRICARE Young Adult is a premium-based health care plan available for purchase by qualified adult children.

Reference options as follows:

- TRICARE Young Adult-Prime
- TRICARE Young Adult-Select

### TriWest Healthcare Alliance

The TRICARE West Region contractor. TriWest after first use.

### uniformed services

Capitalize when referring to members of a particular branch of service. Don't capitalize if referring to service members of other nations.

**Example:** Soldier/Soldiers (U.S. Army); Sailor/Sailors (U.S. Navy), Airman/Airmen (U.S. Air Force), Marine/Marines (U.S. Marine Corps), Coast Guardsman/Coast Guardsmen (U.S. Coast Guard), Guardian/Guardians (U.S. Space Force).

The uniformed services should always appear in the following order:

- U.S. Army
- U.S. Marine Corps
- U.S. Navy
- U.S. Air Force
- U.S. Space Force
- U.S. Coast Guard
- Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Commissioned Officer Corps

### Uniformed Services ID card

#### United Concordia Companies, Inc.

TRICARE Active Duty Dental Program and TRICARE Dental Program contractor. Use United Concordia Companies, Inc. on first reference and United Concordia thereafter.

### use vs. utilize

To **use** something means to employ it for its given purpose:

- I use my garage to park my car.

To **utilize** something is to turn it to a practical use. When you utilize something, you give it a new use that it may not originally have had.

- You can utilize Microsoft Word to draw pictures. Here's an example with a pencil:
- You can **use** my pencil for the sketch if yours is blunt.
- The airport security confiscated her pencil because they were concerned it may be **utilized** as a weapon.

### U.S.

Use in place of United States as a noun or an adjective, except in headlines. In headlines, use "US" without periods. Don't abbreviate in proper names where it's spelled out.



**Note:** Spell out United States when it appears with a quantifying number, Example, “50 United States and the District of Columbia.”

#### **US Family Health Plan, or USFHP**

Always US Family Health Plan, never U.S. Family Health Plan or Uniformed Services Family Health Plan. US stands for “Uniformed Services.”

#### **U.S. territories**

Always lowercase for territories or territory. When listing the territories, list them in alphabetical order as follows: American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

#### **veteran**

Lowercase unless part of a program name (Example, Department of Veterans Affairs).

#### **Veterans Affairs, Department of**

No apostrophe with Veterans. Never Veterans Administration. Full name is the Department of Veterans Affairs. Second reference is VA.

#### **virtual health vs. telehealth**

Telehealth is a component of virtual health. Never “telemedicine.”

- If referencing phone appointments only, use “telehealth.”
- If referencing video appointments, or other aspects of digital health care, use “virtual health.”
- If referencing mental health, use “virtual mental health.”

#### **web**

Lowercase web when referring to the internet.

#### **web page click-on navigation**

When directing the reader to a web page that requires click-on navigation, render that navigation in quotes.

**Example:** Go to [www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil), then select “Beneficiary.”

#### **website**

One word. Only uppercase at the beginning of a sentence.

#### **well-being**

#### **well-child**

Hyphenate when used as an adjective. Example, well-child care, well-child exam.

#### **well-woman**

Hyphenate when used as an adjective. Example, well-woman exam.

#### **WPS Government Services, or WPS**

The TRICARE For Life contractor. WPS after first use.

#### **World Wide Web**

Dated term. Use web, online, or internet instead.

#### **X-ray**

#### **ZIP code**



# COMMON ACRONYMS

These acronyms don't require introduction on first reference:

**DMDC**

**DEERS**

**IUD**

**FBI**

**NASA**

**NATO**

**POW/MIA**

**PTSD**

**USO**





# ACRONYMS

**ABA:** applied behavior analysis

**ACA:** Affordable Care Act

**ACD:** Autism Care Demonstration

**ADA:** America Dental Association

**ADDP:** Active Duty Dental Program

**ADFM:** active duty family member

**ADSM:** active duty service member

**AFHSB:** Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch

**AFMES:** Armed Forces Medical Examiner System

**AHI:** anomalous health incidents

**ALS:** amyotrophic lateral sclerosis

**AMA:** American Medical Association

**ASBP:** Armed Services Blood Program

**ASD:** autism spectrum disorder

**ASW(HA):** Assistant Secretary of War for Health Affairs

**BCAC:** Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator

**BWE:** Beneficiary Web Enrollment

**CAC:** Common Access Card

**CDC:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**CHCBP:** Continued Health Care Benefit Program

**CMS:** Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

**COBRA:** Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act

**DEERS:** Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System

**DHA:** Defense Health Agency

**DMRTI:** Defense Medical Readiness Training Institute

**DOW:** Department of War

**EACE:** Extremity Trauma and Amputation Center of Excellence

**ECHO:** Extended Care Health Option

**EFMP:** Exceptional Family Member Program

**EHR:** electronic health record

**EOB:** explanation of benefits

**ESRD:** end-stage renal disease

**FDA:** Food and Drug Administration

**FEDVIP:** Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program

**FEHB:** Federal Employees Health Benefits

**GAO:** Government Accountability Office

**GME:** Graduate Medical Education

**GSA:** General Services Administration

**HCE:** Hearing Center of Excellence

**HHS:** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**HIPAA:** Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

**HMO:** health maintenance organization

**HPV:** human papillomavirus

**IUD:** intrauterine device

**JPC:** Joint Pathology Center

**JTS:** Joint Trauma System

**LOD:** line of duty

**METC:** Medical Education and Training Campus

**MHS:** Military Health System

**MMSO:** Military Medical Support Office

**MTF:** military treatment facility, use military hospitals and clinics, military hospital or clinic

**NCI:** National Cancer Institute

**NICOE:** National Intrepid Center of Excellence

**NIH:** National Institutes of Health



# ACRONYMS

**NOAA:** National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**OMB:** Office of Management Budget

**OHI:** other health insurance

**OPM:** Office of Personnel Management

**PCM:** primary care manager

**PCP:** primary care provider

**PCS:** Permanent Change of Station

**PGBA:** Palmetto Government Benefits Administrator

**PHCOE:** Psychological Health Center of Excellence

**PHI:** personal health information

**PII:** personally identifiable information

**PPO:** preferred provider organization

**PTSD:** post traumatic stress disorder

**QLE:** Qualifying Life Event

**RSV:** respiratory syncytial virus

**SARS:** severe acute respiratory syndrome

**SSA:** Social Security Administration

**SSN:** Social Security number

**TAMP:** Transitional Assistance Management Program

**TBI:** traumatic brain injury

**TBICOE:** Traumatic Brain Injury Center of Excellence

**TDP:** TRICARE Dental Program

**TFL:** TRICARE For Life

**TOP:** TRICARE Overseas Program

**TPR:** TRICARE Prime Remote

**TRR:** TRICARE Retired Reserve

**TRS:** TRICARE Reserve Select

**TYA:** TRICARE Young Adult

**USUHS:** Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences

**USFHP:** US Family Health Plan (Note: “US” stands for Uniformed Services, not United States.)

**USPHS:** U.S. Public Health Service

**VA:** Department of Veterans Affairs

**VCE:** Vision Center of Excellence

**VHA:** Veterans Health Administration

**WIC:** Women, Infants, and Children



# MILITARY RANKS

For external documents, use AP style for military ranks. For internal documents, use the abbreviations listed below.

ARMY			
Pay Grade	Full Title	AP Abbreviation	International Abbreviation
O-10	General	Gen.	GEN
O-9	Lieutenant General	Lt. Gen.	LTG
O-8	Major General	Maj. Gen.	MG
O-7	Brigadier General	Brig. Gen.	BG
O-6	Colonel	Col.	COL
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel	Lt. Col.	LTC
O-4	Major	Maj.	MAJ
O-3	Captain	Capt.	CPT
O-2	First Lieutenant	1st Lt.	1LT
O-1	Second Lieutenant	2nd Lt.	2LT
W-5	Chief Warrant Officer	CW5	CW5
W-4	Chief Warrant Officer 4	CW4	CW4
W-3	Chief Warrant Officer 3	CW3	CW3
W-2	Chief Warrant Officer 2	CW2	CW2
W-1	Warrant Officer 1	WO1	WO1
E-9	Sergeant Major of the Army	Sgt. Maj. of the Army	SMA
	Command Sergeant Major	Command Sgt. Maj.	CSM
	Sergeant Major	Sgt. Maj.	SGM
E-8	First Sergeant	1st Sgt.	1SG
	Master Sergeant	Master Sgt.	MSG
E-7	Sergeant First Class	Sgt. 1st Class	SFC
E-6	Staff Sergeant	Staff Sgt.	SSG
E-5	Sergeant	Sgt.	SGT
E-4	Corporal	Cpl.	CPL
	Specialist	Spc.	SPC
E-3	Private First Class	Pfc.	PFC
E-2	Private	Pvt.	PV2
E-1	Private	Pvt.	PVT



# MILITARY RANKS

For external documents, use AP style for military ranks. For internal documents, use the abbreviations listed below.

NAVY / COAST GUARD			
Pay Grade	Full Title	AP Abbreviation	International Abbreviation
O-10	Admiral	Adm.	ADM
O-9	Vice Admiral	Vice Adm.	VADM
O-8	Rear Admiral	Rear Adm.	RADM
O-7	Rear Admiral	Rear Adm.	RDML
O-6	Captain	Capt.	CAPT
O-5	Commander	Cmdr.	CDR
O-4	Lieutenant Commander	Lt. Cmdr.	LCDR
O-3	Lieutenant	Lt.	LT
O-2	Lieutenant Junior Grade	Lt. j.g.	LTJG
O-1	Ensign	Ensign	ENS
W-5	Chief Warrant Officer 5	Chief Warrant Officer	CW05
W-4	Chief Warrant Officer 4	Chief Warrant Officer	CW04
W-3	Chief Warrant Officer 3	Chief Warrant Officer	CW03
W-2	Chief Warrant Officer 2	Chief Warrant Officer	CW02
W-1	Warrant Officer 1	Warrant Officer	WO1
E-9	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy	Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy	MCPON
	Master Chief Petty Officer	Master Chief Petty Officer	MCPO
E-8	Senior Chief Petty Officer	Senior Chief Petty Officer	SCPO
E-7	Chief Petty Officer	Chief Petty Officer	CPO
E-6	Petty Officer 1	Petty Officer 1st Class	P01
E-5	Petty Officer 2	Petty Officer 2nd Class	P02
E-4	Petty Officer 3	Petty Officer 3rd Class	P03
E-3	Seaman	Seaman	SN
E-2	Seaman Apprentice	Seaman Apprentice	SA
E-1	Seaman Recruit	Seaman Recruit	SR



# MILITARY RANKS

For external documents, use AP style for military ranks. For internal documents, use the abbreviations listed below.

MARINE CORPS			
Pay Grade	Full Title	AP Abbreviation	International Abbreviation
O-10	General	Gen.	Gen
O-9	Lieutenant General	Lt. Gen.	LtGen
O-8	Major General	Maj. Gen.	MajGen
O-7	Brigadier General	Brig. Gen.	Bgen
O-6	Colonel	Col.	Col
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel	Lt. Col.	LtCol
O-4	Major	Maj.	Maj
O-3	Captain	Capt.	Capt
O-2	First Lieutenant	1st Lt.	1st Lt
O-1	Second Lieutenant	2nd Lt.	2nd Lt
W-5	Chief Warrant Officer 5	Chief Warrant Officer	CWO-5
W-4	Chief Warrant Officer 4	Chief Warrant Officer	CWO-4
W-3	Chief Warrant Officer 3	Chief Warrant Officer	CWO-3
W-2	Chief Warrant Officer 2	Chief Warrant Officer	CWO-2
W-1	Warrant Officer 1	Warrant Officer	WO-1
E-9	Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps	Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps	SgtMajMC
	Sergeant Major	Sgt. Maj.	SgtMaj
	Master Gunnery Sergeant	Master Gunnery Sgt.	MGySgt
E-8	First Sergeant	1st Sgt.	1Sgt
	Master Sergeant	Master Sgt.	MSgt
E-7	Gunnery Sergeant	Gunnery Sgt.	GySgt
E-6	Staff Sergeant	Staff Sgt.	SSgt
E-5	Sergeant	Sgt.	Sgt
E-4	Corporal	Cpl.	Cpl
E-3	Lance Corporal	Lance Cpl.	LCpl
E-2	Private First Class	Pfc.	PFC
E-1	Private	Pvt.	Pvt





# MILITARY RANKS

For external documents, use AP style for military ranks. For internal documents, use the abbreviations listed below.

AIR FORCE / SPACE FORCE			
Pay Grade	Full Title	AP Abbreviation	International Abbreviation
O-10	General	Gen.	Gen
O-9	Lieutenant General	Lt. Gen.	Lt Gen
O-8	Major General	Maj. Gen.	Maj Gen
O-7	Brigadier General	Brig. Gen.	Brig Gen
O-6	Colonel	Col.	Col
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel	Lt. Col.	Lt Col
O-4	Major	Maj.	Maj
O-3	Captain	Capt.	Capt
O-2	First Lieutenant	1st Lt.	1st Lt
O-1	Second Lieutenant	2nd Lt.	2nd Lt
E-9	Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force	Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force	CMSAF
	Chief Master Sergeant	Chief Master Sgt.	CMSgt
E-8	Senior Master Sergeant	Senior Master Sgt.	SMSgt
E-7	Master Sergeant	Master Sgt.	MSgt
E-6	Technical Sergeant	Tech. Sgt.	TSgt
E-5	Staff Sergeant	Staff Sgt.	SSgt
E-4	Senior Airman	Senior Airman	SrA
E-3	Airman First Class	Airman 1st Class	A1C
E-2	Airman	Airman	Amn
E-1	Airman Basic	Airman	AB



# MILITARY RANKS

For external documents, use AP style for military ranks. For internal documents, use the abbreviations listed below.

## COMMISSIONED CORPS OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Pay Grade	Full Title	AP Abbreviation	International Abbreviation
O-10	Admiral	Adm.	ADM
O-9	Vice Admiral	Vice Adm.	VADM
O-8	Rear Admiral	Rear Adm.	RADM
O-7	Rear Admiral	Rear Adm.	RDML
O-6	Captain	Capt.	CAPT
O-5	Commander	Cmdr.	CDR
O-4	Lieutenant Commander	Lt. Cmdr.	LCDR
O-3	Lieutenant	Lt.	LT
O-2	Lieutenant Junior Grade	Lt. j.g.	LTJG
O-1	Ensign	Ensign	ENS

## NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION COMMISSIONED OFFICER CORPS

Pay Grade	Full Title	AP Abbreviation	International Abbreviation
O-9	Lieutenant General	Lt. Gen.	LTG
O-8	Major General	Maj. Gen.	MG
O-7	Brigadier General	Brig. Gen.	BG
O-6	Colonel	Col.	COL
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel	Lt. Col.	LTC
O-4	Major	Maj.	MAJ
O-3	Captain	Capt.	CPT
O-2	First Lieutenant	1st Lt.	1LT
O-1	Second Lieutenant	2nd Lt.	2LT



# QUESTIONS?

**If you have questions about the MHS Style Guide, have suggestions for items to include, or need to report an error, send an email to the MHS Marketing and Branding team:**

[dha.ncr.comm.mbx.mhs-marketing-and-branding@health.mil](mailto:dha.ncr.comm.mbx.mhs-marketing-and-branding@health.mil)



# ABOUT THE MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM

**The Military Health System** is America's largest and most complex health care system and the world's preeminent military health care delivery operation. We save lives on the battlefield, combat infectious disease around the world, and care for 9.5 million TRICARE beneficiaries, the nation's largest health benefit plan.

**The MHS is more than just combat medicine.** We are a system that provides health care delivery at home, medical education, public health, and innovative medical research and development.

While our system is complex, our goals are clear:

- Ensure America's active duty and reserve component personnel are healthy so they can complete their national security missions.
- Ensure that all active and reserve medical personnel in uniform are trained and ready to provide medical care in support of operational forces around the world.
- Provide a medical benefit to uniformed service members, retirees, and their families that is equal to the service and sacrifice they give to our country.

**Our unique patient needs** related to combat readiness and recovery means the MHS has experience and conducts research others will not. Readiness goals – not profit margins – drive how we provide care and conduct research. Because of this, many MHS treatments and discoveries have been adapted for use in the private sector.

The components of the MHS include:

- ASW(HA)
- Joint Staff Surgeon
- Defense Health Agency
- USUHS
- Army Medicine
- Navy Medicine
- Air Force Medicine
- Office of the Joint Surgeon General, U.S. National Guard Bureau

